

WILLIAM WATT KERR, M. B., C. M.

**Born the 27th of June, 1857, in Edinburgh, Scotland.
Died the 26th of April, 1917, in San Francisco.**

Dr. Kerr was the seventh child of Andrew Kerr, architect, Her Majesty's Board of Works, Scotland, and Grace Watt Kerr, sister of William Watt, formerly Regent of the University of California, and of Robert Watt, formerly State Comptroller of California. He was educated in the Royal High School of Edinburgh and in Edinburgh University, taking his M. A. in 1877 and his C. M. and M. B. in 1881.

He came to live in San Francisco in December, 1881. He was married here to Miss Rowena Boobar in 1886. He is survived by his widow and by two brothers, Andrew Kerr of Edinburgh and James Kerr of San Francisco, and by three sisters.

He was a member of and had been President of the San Francisco County Medical Society, the Medical Society of the State of California and the California Academy of Medicine. He was a Fellow of the American Medical Association.

He became Professor of Therapeutics in the Medical Department of the University of California in 1887, and was changed to the Chair of Clinical Medicine in 1888, which position he held at the time of his death.

He was visiting physician to the City and County Hospital (now the San Francisco Hospital) and to the Children's Hospital. He was consulting physician to St. Luke's Hospital, the Maternity Hospital, San Francisco Lying-in Hospital and Foundling Asylum and Training School for Nursery Maids.

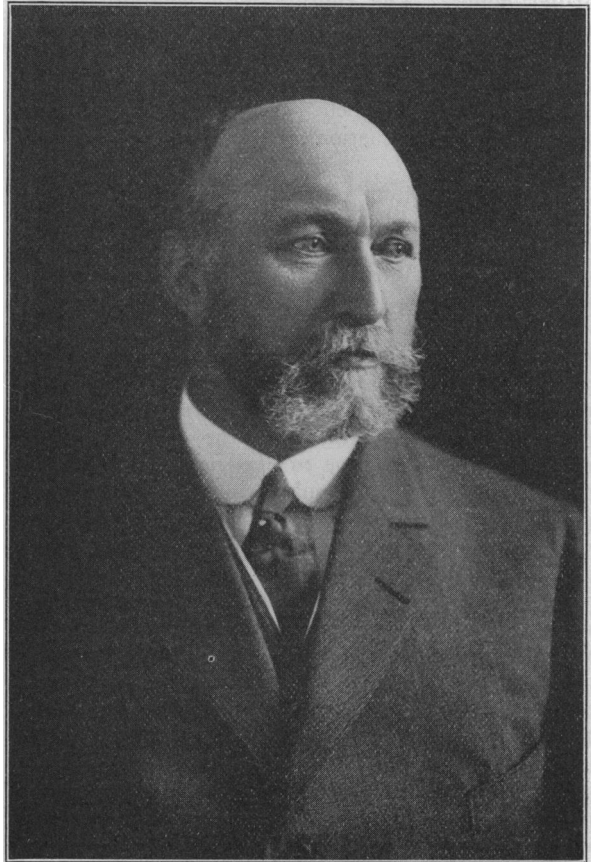
He was a member of the Presbyterian Church.

These are the formal statements of what Dr. Kerr did and was in the community of San Francisco and in the medical body politic, but there is something more to be said of the man we have known and with whom we have lived and worked and agreed and fought and whom we have loved.

All comments on his character by those who knew him longest and best refer back to the family of which he was one, and to his father and mother as the source and school of those qualities which made him what we found him to be. In that home he learned a religion, part of it—perhaps the minor part—related to a creed and a church; the rest was a very keen appreciation of what was right and wrong between man and man, and a steadfastness in following the right which never slackened. He showed this in his relations with others in his profession, and he showed it equally in his relations to his patients. He gave unto all their due and he demanded the same measure for himself. He had, of course, many warm friends who will always miss him, but the people who will miss him most are those who were his patients, in many homes and hospitals, to whom he always went, not merely as the technician to recognize and control diseased conditions, but as a friend with keen sympathy and just appreciation. This has been said by many such a one who has looked back over decades of his service and has recognized that it had finally ended and that the loss sustained by his death was a double one. As a physician he was the best type of the family physician, taking care of all conditions of all the members of a household unless a surgeon or a specialist was required, and even then he very properly selected the operator and kept closely in touch with all of the surgical phase. This gave him a very broad experience in a rich clinical field, and he took advantage of it and developed with the opportunity and became a most skillful physician and wise consultant.

In the profession Dr. Kerr was generally looked upon as a practitioner rather than as an investigator. Only a few know that his first intimation of

the cardiac condition which finally caused his death came from his fainting in a hot bath at Sol Duc Springs in Washington. The fact and its import so impressed him that he sent for his brother to come up from San Francisco to be with him, and then he took a dozen more of the baths in order to study the phenomena which developed, even though each bath risked his life. His experience was made the occasion of a valuable paper read before the San Francisco County Medical Society, in which his personality as a subject was hidden behind a hypothetical patient. No man can give greater proof of his devotion to cause or to person than that he ventures his life for them—no other act can testify, as that does, to the inherited qualities and trained powers that have made the simple man great.



As a teacher of clinical medicine he ranked high, and a very large percentage of his students quote him rather than text books. It cannot be doubted for one instant but that he had a very great and a most healthy influence on the teaching of medicine in California during those decades of renaissance which have changed the didactic, proprietary schools to modern clinical laboratories. He did a great work on a very high plane and he leaves us an example which it will be hard for us adequately to follow.

Extract from a Sermon Preached by Rev. Frederick W. Clappett, in Trinity Church, San Francisco, on Sunday, April 29, 1917.

During the past week there has entered our lives a keen sense of personal loss in the death of a man of strong power in this community; the family physician, beloved and honored by so many of this congregation. He was, indeed, the good physician, a veritable tower of strength and an influence of a wholesome type, the range of which it would be impossible to estimate. In fact his passing out has been the inspiration of this ser-

mon, because the very qualities that made St. Stephen so strong belonged to him. He was loyal and courageous, and tender as a child. He had a deep, abiding faith in God, a strong religious nature ever living close to the Infinite. That he was brilliant and highly successful, in his profession, is known to all; but the source and fountain of that strength was the life hidden in God. The robust, strong nature of the Scotchman, frank and bright and filled with the real sunshine of true humor, we seemed to cling to him, as the ivy clings to the oak. There are so many of you, listening to me, this morning, to whom Dr. William Watt Kerr was a dear, personal friend. He was more than the physician; he was the family counsellor. He was brave to the end. With a mortal affliction, so well known to him that made certain the snapping of the vital thread at any moment, he went from home to home, administering to the sick, with all his might. He died in the very act of life's supreme duties. His, indeed, was a career of rare ability, but his kindness of heart seems to overmaster all else. Let me say, that in all the homes I have entered in this city, during a pastorate of almost eighteen years, no name was mentioned with more loving affection than that of Dr. Kerr. He ministered to almost every member of my family, and once he remained at the side of one of my children during an entire night, as she hovered between life and death. God bless and strengthen the brave woman who was his life companion, his angel as he loved to call her, the loving wife who watched over him and cared for him with so much tenderness.

EXPLANATION OF 1917 AMENDMENTS TO THE MEDICAL PRACTICE ACT.

Assembly Bill 1375 (Gebhart).

Effective after July 27, 1917.

No. 1. In Sec. 2, the annual meeting of the Board of Medical Examiners is changed from the second Tuesday of January to the third Monday in October. The place of meeting, Sacramento, is not changed.

No. 2. In Sec. 2, the language is changed so that the Board may publish and sell a directory, etc. Heretofore it seemed to be mandatory upon the Board. Also provides for an annual \$2.00 tax for all licentiates and automatically suspends or revokes the certificate of those who do not pay the tax within 60 days after January 1st of each year. Such certificate, however, may be restored on payment of \$10.00.

No. 3. Sec. 8 is amended to include the issuance of certificate to practice midwifery.

No. 4. Sec. 9 is amended to include the qualification of applicants for the future in the practice of midwifery.

No. 5. Sec. 10 is amended to include the subjects and minimum requirements of study for a certificate to practice midwifery.

No. 6. Sec. 11 is amended to list the subjects of examination for applicants to practice midwifery.

No. 7. The same section is amended to allow the use of an interpreter, selected by the Board, in an examination, the fee for same to be paid by the applicant.

No. 8. Sec. 12 is amended to give the officers of the United States Health Service the right of registration, the same as the regular United States Army or Navy medical officer. This is done at the request of Surgeon-General Blue of the United States Health Service.

No. 9. Sec. 12½ is amended to provide for the registration of the midwives already in practice in the State of California. It provides for a test of competency, proof of good moral character, etc., and a fee of \$20.00.

This section also provides for an oral, practical or clinical examination for those holders of certificates "to practice osteopathy" issued under the laws of this state, who desire to qualify for a Physician's & Surgeon's certificate.

No. 10. Sec. 13 is amended to raise the fee for reciprocity applicants from \$50.00 to \$100.00. The reciprocity feature of the act necessitates the employment of investigators, clerks, etc., and it is necessary, therefore, to raise the fee.

No. 11. Sec. 14 of the act is amended to provide for the revocation of certificates to practice midwifery.

No. 12. Sec. 15 of the act is amended to strike out the word "other" which heretofore has resulted in placing an ambiguous construction upon the terms of the section.

No. 12½—

No. 13. Sec. 17 has been amended to include both physician or surgeon or practitioner—that is, the use of any term indicating that one is licensed to practice. In the same section the penalty clause is stricken out.

No. 14. The penalty clause has been stricken out of Sec. 18.

No. 15. A new section has been created designating the act as the State Medical Practice Act, and providing a penalty for the violation of the provisions of any portion thereof.

THE SAN DIEGO MEETING.

Due to the preparations of the Committee on Arrangements, the meeting at San Diego was a great success. Over four hundred names were inscribed in the register. The management of the Hotel del Coronado spared no effort to meet the requirements of the Society and its guests. Our thanks to them all.

THE PUBLICATION COMMITTEE.

The President has appointed the following Publication Committee for 1917-18: Alfred B. Grosse, William Palmer Lucas, Alfred Cummings Reed and George E. Tucker, all of San Francisco. The Editor is *ex-officio* chairman of the committee.

THE 1918 MEETING AT DEL MONTE.

The Society will meet at Del Monte next April. This delightful spot affords every comfort and pleasure, and at the same time is far enough away from any busy center to allow those attending the meeting to forget the trials and tribulations of active practice.

Book Reviews

"The Path of the Destroyer." A history of leprosy in the Hawaiian Islands and 30 years' research into the means by which it has been spread. By A. A. St. Moritz. Honolulu, 1916.

This is a curious medley of things Hawaiian; it contains considerable matter concerning leprosy